

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICATION FOR LETTERS PATENT FOR:

DEVICE AND METHOD FOR HOLDING STRIKING TARGETS FOR USE IN
THE PRACTICE OF MARTIAL ARTS

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**DEVICE AND METHOD FOR HOLDING STRIKING TARGETS FOR USE
IN THE PRACTICE OF MARTIAL ARTS**

5 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field Of The Invention

 The present invention relates to devices that are used to hold striking targets, such as boards of wood, for a person who is practicing a martial art. More particularly, the present invention relates to devices that are used to hold more than one striking target in more than one orientation.

2. Description Of Related Art

15 In many forms of martial arts, the skill of striking an object with hands or feet is practiced. By practicing the striking of hard objects, the muscles, tendons and bones of the hands, arms, feet and legs can be conditioned and strengthened. In this manner, a martial artist can strike objects much harder than flesh and bones without becoming injured.

 There is a great variety of objects that are used to train the striking skills of a martial artist. Such objects include, punching bags, kicking bags, sand bags and the like. However, one of the most widely used and popular striking targets is the wooden board.

A wooden striking board is traditionally a one-foot square board of pine. The pine is typically between $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch and one inch thick. Such boards are used because they are relatively inexpensive and only break if they receive a forceful, well aimed blow. Thus, by practicing striking wooden boards, a martial artist not only conditions their body, the martial artist also learns accuracy and how to focus a blow.

Although pine boards are inexpensive, they do cost money and must be both purchased before use and disposed of after use. For this reason, reusable striking boards that simulate wood boards have been developed. Such simulated wood boards are typically comprised of molded plastic sections that snap together along a common joint line. The two sections come apart only when struck with a blow of sufficient force that is applied directly to the center of the board along the common joint. Once the two sections are separated by a blow, the two sections can be rejoined and the simulated board can be used again. Such reusable striking targets are exemplified by U.S. Patent No. 4,083,557 to Friedenthal, entitled Reusable Karate Striking Board.

Regardless of whether a real wooden striking board or a reusable striking board is used, the striking board must be supported when it is struck. Of course, a person practicing martial arts can have another person hold the striking board. However, a willing and able volunteer is not always available. It is for this reason that board holding devices have been developed.

There are many types and styles of board holding devices. In a simple form, board holding devices exist that hold a single striking board in a single position. Such prior art board holding devices are exemplified by U.S. Patent No. 6,149,553, to Antoszewski, entitled Martial Arts Board Holding Device.

However, when a martial artist is practicing striking, that martial artist may want to practice a combination of blows, where the martial artist strikes multiple locations with different blows as part of a single offensive attack. In practicing such combination attacks, a martial artist must set up multiple striking boards at multiple different positions. In the prior art, there do exist board holding devices that hold more than one striking

board. Such prior art devices are shown by U.S. Patent No. 6,280,351 to Wong, entitled Striking Practice Device and U.S. Patent No. 5,476,433 to Bruner, entitled Universal Martial Arts Training Apparatus.

5 However, the positions that such prior art devices hold the striking boards are set and can only be modestly adjusted. Thus, a martial artist is limited in his/her ability to position the striking boards in different positions for different combination blow
10 attacks.

A need therefore exists for a more robust board holding device that can hold multiple striking boards in a wide variety of positions and orientations, so that a martial artist is less restricted in practicing
15 combination blows. This need is met by the present invention as described and claimed below.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

20 The present invention is a board holding device for practicing a martial art and its associated method of use. The board holding device includes a framework that has a plurality of vertical rails. The vertical rails define sides of at least two striking planes. Connectors are disposed along each of the vertical

rails. The connectors are used to selectively join striking boards to the vertical rails at any point along the vertical rails. In this manner, multiple striking boards can be placed across any or all of the striking planes. The striking boards can also be placed on the outside of the framework or on the inside of the framework. Thus, the striking boards can be arranged to be broken with a pushing blow or a pulling blow, as desired by the martial artist.

The present invention device enables a martial artist to arrange multiple striking targets at any position within multiple striking fields. A martial artist can therefore practice combination blows that are customized to the physical requirements of that martial artist.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a better understanding of the present invention, reference is made to the following description of exemplary embodiments thereof, considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of a board holding device in accordance with the present invention;

5 FIG. 2 is a top view of the embodiment of the present invention shown in Fig. 1; and

10 FIG. 3 is a top view of the embodiment of the present invention shown in Fig. 1 also showing the directions of blows to illustrate different blow types.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

15 Although the present invention board holding device can be used with real wood striking boards, it is better suited for use with reusable striking boards. In this manner, one set of reusable striking boards can be altered for use with the present
20 invention and can be repeatedly used throughout the life of the device. Accordingly, in the embodiment of the present invention device that is illustrated and described, reusable striking boards are shown in order to set forth the best mode contemplated for the
25 invention. However, it should be understood that real

wood boards can be used in place of the reusable striking boards.

In Fig. 1, an exemplary embodiment of a board holding device 10 is shown. The board holding device 10 has a framework 12 that includes at least four vertical rails 14, 16, 18, 20. The four vertical rails include two front rails 18, 20 and two rear rails 14, 16 that are spread wider apart than are the two front rails 18, 20. All four of the vertical rails 14, 16, 18, 20 have a standing height of between four feet and eight feet, with a preferred height of about six feet. In this manner, the framework 12 has the same height as an average full grown man.

The vertical rails 14, 16, 18, 20 are joined together at the top of the framework 12 and at the bottom of the framework 12 with cross elements 22. In this manner, the vertical rails 14, 16, 18, 20 are rigidly set in position within the framework 12 of the device 10. The vertical rails 14, 16, 18, 20 are also preferably made of metal so that the vertical rails 14, 16, 18, 20 will not bend or fold when impacted by the hardest blow of a martial artist.

To further stabilize the framework 12, the framework can be mounted to a wall 24 and/or the

ground. In this manner, when the framework 12 absorbs the striking blow from a martial artist, the framework 12 does not move and cannot be toppled by the blow.

5 In the embodiment of Fig. 1, the two front vertical rails 18, 20 lay in a common plane that is parallel to the mounting wall 24. The two front vertical rails 18, 20 are disposed a first distance D1 apart. This first distance D1 is slightly smaller than the length of the striking board 30 that is going to
10 be used. For example, if the striking board 30 has a length of twelve inches, then the distance D1 between the front vertical rails 18, 20 would be about eleven inches.

The distance D2 between each front vertical 18, 20 rail and each adjacent rear vertical rail 14, 16 is
15 equal to the distance D1 between the two front vertical rails 18, 20. As such, the distance between each front vertical rail 18, 20 and each adjacent rear vertical rail 14, 16 is slightly less than the length
20 of the striking board 30.

The left front vertical rail 18 and the right front vertical rail 20 are parallel and define the side of a front striking plane 31. The front striking plane 31 is parallel to the mounting wall 24. The

right rear vertical rail 16 and the right front
vertical rail 20 are parallel and define the sides of
a right side striking plane 32. The right side
striking plane 32 intersects the front striking plane
5 31 at an obtuse angle. Similarly, the left rear
vertical element 14 and the left front vertical
element 18 are parallel and define a left side
striking plane 34. The left side striking plane 34
interests the front striking plane 31 at an acute
10 angle that is complimentary to the obtuse angle made
by the right side striking plane 32.

The framework 12 defines an internal region that
exists between the four vertical rails 14, 16, 18, 20.
Within this internal region of the framework are
15 disposed three optional catch partitions 36. The catch
partitions 36 are segments of tear resistant cloth
that are suspended between the vertical rails 14, 16,
18, 20. A first of the catch partitions 36 is
suspended behind the left side striking plane 34. A
20 second of the catch partitions 36 is suspended behind
the front striking plane 31. Finally, a third of the
catch partitions 36 is suspended behind the right side
striking plane 32.

Catch plates 38 can also be provided at the bottom of the framework 12. The catch plates 38 can be cloth, but are preferably rigid. The catch plates 38 are angled and extend forward out of the internal region of the framework 12. The catch plates 38 preferably do not extend any higher than one foot from the bottom of the framework 12. Thus, the catch plates 38 define the front of a catch pocket 41 that exists between the forward catch plate 38 and the rearward catch partition 36. The purpose of this catch pocket 41 is later explained.

Referring to Fig. 2, it can be seen that on each of the vertical rails 14, 16, 18, 20 are disposed connectors 40. The connectors 40 can be snaps, hooks, pegs or the like. However, in the preferred embodiment, the connectors 40 are segments of hook and loop material, such as Velcro. The connectors 40 are disposed along the length of each of the vertical rails 14, 16, 18, 20. The connectors 40 are disposed both on the face of each vertical rail 14, 16, 18, 20, facing outwardly, and on the rear of each vertical rail 14, 16, 18, 20 facing inwardly.

Connectors 42 are also provided on the face surface and the rear surface of each of the striking

boards 30. The connectors 42 on the striking boards 30 align with and engage the connectors 40 on the vertical rails 14, 16, 18, 20 when a striking board 30 is placed against any two adjacent vertical rails.

5 In Fig. 2, it can be seen that the striking boards 30 can be placed across the left side striking plane 34, the front striking plane 31 and/or the right side striking plane 32. The striking board 30 being placed across the left side striking plane 34 and the
10 right side striking plane 32 are shown being attached to the outside of the vertical rails that define those striking planes. However, a striking board 30 can also be place across the inside of any striking plane. In
15 Fig. 2, a striking board 30 is place across the front striking plane 31. However, the striking board 30 is contacting the inside edge of the two vertical rails 18, 20 that define the front striking plane 31. Thus, the striking board 30 is positioned within the interior of the framework 12.

20 From Fig. 2, it will be understood that multiple striking boards 30 can be placed in each of the striking planes 31, 32, 34. The striking boards 30 can be placed either on the outside of the vertical rails

14, 16, 18, 20 or on the inside of the vertical rails
14, 16, 18, 20, as desired.

Referring to Fig. 3, the same configuration in
Fig. 2 is shown where striking boards 30 are placed in
5 each of the three striking planes 31, 32, 34. The
striking board in the left side striking plane 34 is
placed on the outside of the vertical rails 14, 18.
This striking board 30 can be broken by hitting the
striking board 30 with a forward blow, as is indicated
10 by arrow 43. When the striking board 30 is hit and
broken in two, the pieces of the broken striking board
are confined by the catch partition 36. The broken
pieces are then guided to the ground by the catch
partition 36. Similarly, a striking board in the right
15 side striking plane 32 is placed on the outside of two
of the vertical rails 16, 20. This striking board 30
can be broken by hitting the striking board 30 with a
forward blow, as is indicated by arrow 42. When the
striking board 30 is hit and broken in two, the pieces
20 of the broken striking board are confined by the catch
partition 36. The broken pieces are then guided to the
ground within the framework 12 by the catch partition
36. The broken pieces are then held in the catch

pocket 41 (Fig. 1) until they are reassembled and reused.

5 In Fig. 3, the striking board 30 in the front striking plane 31 is placed against the rear of the front vertical rails 18, 20 inside the framework 12. In this orientation, the striking board 30 can only be broken with a pulling blow, as is indicated by arrow 45. Thus, it will be understood that by positioning the striking boards 30 either in the inside of the framework 12 or on the outside of the framework 12, 10 the striking boards 30 can be set to practice either an outward striking blow or an inward pulling blow.

Referring lastly back to Fig. 1, it can be seen that a martial artist can place multiple striking 15 boards 30 in each of the striking planes 31, 32, 34. The striking boards 30 can be placed at any height along the framework 12 and in any of the three striking planes 31, 32, 34. Furthermore, the striking boards 30 can be set to receive either striking blows 20 or pulling blows.

When a martial artist stands in front of the device 10, that martial artist can practice many combination blows in three different planes. As the striking boards 30 are broken they fall and are caught

by the catch pockets 41 at the bottom of the
framework, where they can be readily retrieved,
reassembled and reused.

5 It will be understood that the embodiment of the
present invention device that is illustrated and
described is merely exemplary and that a person
skilled in the art can modify the shown forms. For
example, in the described embodiment, the board
holding device has four vertical rails and is mounted
10 to a wall for support. It will be understood that more
than four vertical rails can be used and the overall
framework can be made to be free standing so a martial
artist can circle the framework. All such alternate
embodiments, modifications and variations are intended
15 to be included within the scope of the present
invention as claimed.